THE VAULT OF MINDLESS FELLOWSHIP!

50¢ SEPTEMBER 1972 NUMBER 1

KIRBY UNLEASHED

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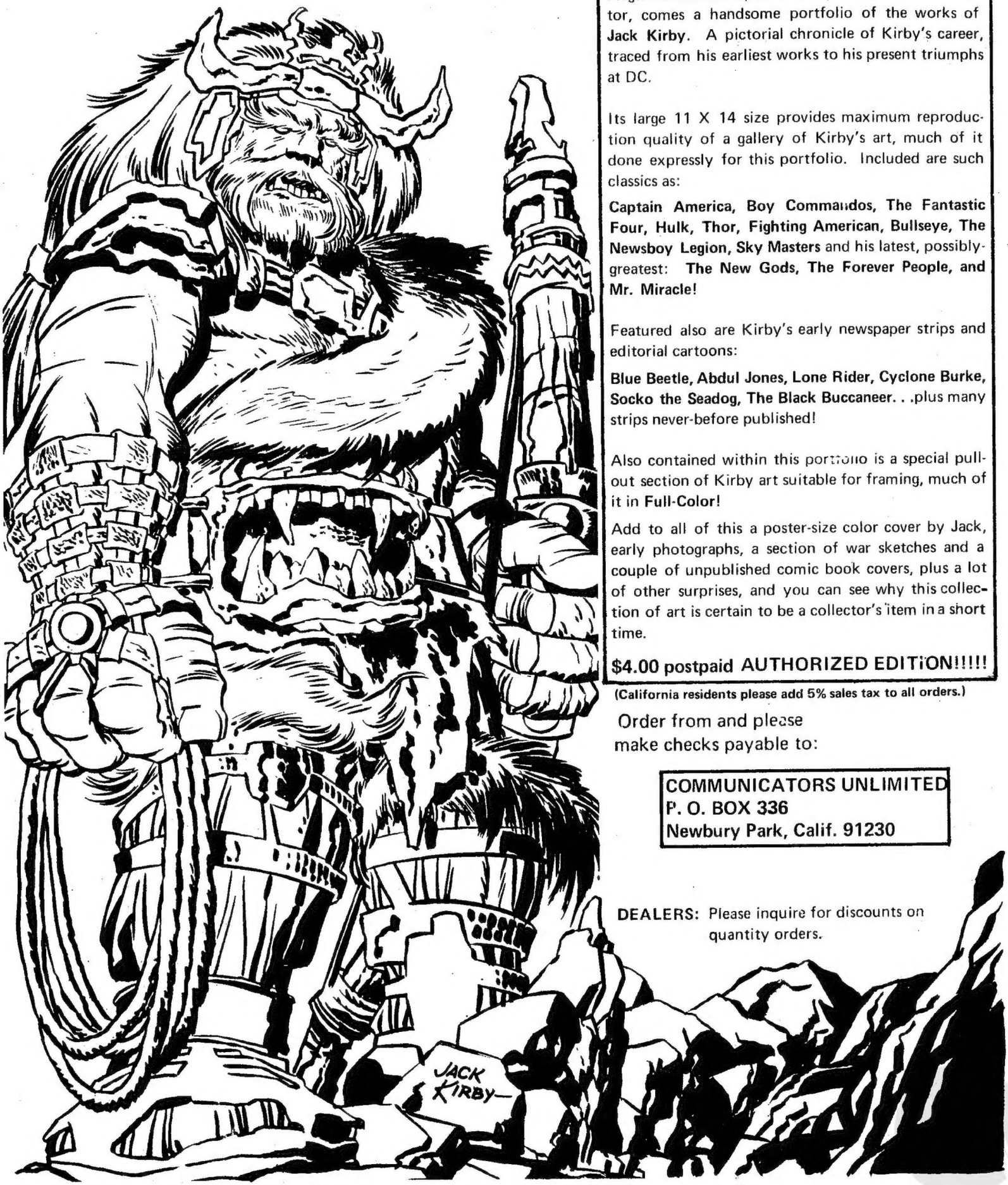

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the VAULT OF MINDLESS FELLOWSHIP

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Contents

Introduction To Fandom 4
Comics Fans By Vince Davis ...7
The Neal Adams Panel 10
Big Barda by Jack Kirby 16
News and Reviews 23
Roy's Rostrum: Writing Conan Roy Thomas and Barry Smith 24
Alex Toth Speaks 27
Editorials 29

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Special Thanks to the Firesign Theatre for providing us with a marvellous name for our publication.

Bruce Ayres and Mobius Tripp

A Letter to the Readers:

Welcome to the first issue of the Vault of Mindless Fellowship. The magazine is designed for three purposes : 1) To allow the local comics fan more enjoyment of his hobby; 2) To introduce anyone who does not know about it to fandom at large; and 3) To provide a focal point for Madison fandom to gather about. More on all this later (Check the Buffalo Chips column on the editorial page.)

We would like to apologize for the less than professional appearance of the magazine. We put it together with two persons as a staff, no equipment other than scissors and a ruler, and one hell of a lot of sweat and fingerprints. Not that it wasn't fun. In the process of gathering material, we met and talked to Denny O'Neil, Neal Adams, Jack Kirby, Alex Toth, and Denis Kitchen, just to name a few. The magazine took us several months of on and off work to produce, and we decided to sacrifice a little bit of neatness and get it out three months earlier than it would have been otherwise.

We'd like to thank Jack Kirby, Neal Adams, Bob Overstreet, Roy Thomas, and Vince Davis for letting us use material in this issue. The outstanding feature is the Neal Adams panel, which tells you practically anything you ever wanted to know about comics.

Now, on to next issue. We would like to hereby invite all of the local fans to contribute, as we don't want to do it all ourselves again. Artwork is especially needed, and good articles. Also : people who can do typing, layout, and other various chores. No pay, unfortunately. The theme of the next issue is Underground Comix. We also hope to have an interview with Barry Smith. Anyone wishing to contribute, Call 233-1583 and ask for Bruce.

Lastly, we'd like to ask all the local merchants to place ads in our magazine so we can increase the size. Also, if anyone wants a poster of the Big Barda Centerfold, go to the Madison Book Coop They have them there for 25¢ each.

Goodnight. Bruce Ayres and Mobius Tripp

INTRODUCTION to FANDOM

by Jerry Bails and Bill Spicer

Why people collect comics:

Collecting is one of the most universal avocations of man. There is no end to the list of things that people collect. Every artifact of man and nature - from matchbook covers to great works of art - is, at one time or another, the object of some collector's frantic search. To the non-collector, this mania must seem incomprehensible; but to the collector himself, it is a fascinating and continually rewarding pasttime.

Many people would be surprised to learn that along with coins, stamps, and books one of the most prized collectors' items throughout the world is panel art - i.e. comic magazines, newspaper strips, and related material. People from all walks of life including scientists, business people, students, andactors, collect comics, and spend many delightful hours with this hobby.

People collect comics for a variety of reasons. Some collectors are amatuer comic artists and writers, or even professionals in the field, who collect outstanding examples of comic art for inspiration in their own work. Others who collect and study the comics as examples of popular art, interesting in their own right or because they reflect the values of the culture of the period in which they were produced. However, the vast majority of comic collectors only want to enhance their own enjoyment of this popular media, or recapture the "sense of Wonder" that comics provided in their youth. In addition to true collectors, there are also those who speculate in comics or merely buy comics to resell at a profit. There is a little bit of speculator in all collectors.

How to start collecting:

Most collectors of comic books begin by buying new issues in mint condition on the newsstands.(Subscription copies are, as a rule, folded and hence unsuited for collecting.) Each week new comics appear on the newsstands that are destined to be new collectors' items. The trick is to locate a store that carries a complete line of comics. In some localities, this may be difficult. Most collectors frequent several magazine shops in order not to miss something they want. Even then it pays to be in contact with collectors in other areas. Sooner or later nearly every collector has to rely upon a friend to obtain an item for him that is unavailable locally.

Once you have located a good source of comics, find out on what days they are delivered. Plan to drop by regularily as soon as or as soon after the comics are checked in as possible. This way you may avoid missing an issue, and you also stand a better chance of getting mint copies. You will find that comics rapidly become damaged on the stands, especially if they are displayed in certain types of racks.

Before you buy any comic to add to your collection, you should check to inspect its condition. Unlike stamps and coins, defective conditions are not generally highly prized. Remember that every blemish or sign of wear depreciates the beauty and value of your comics.

The serious collector usually purchases extra copies o of popular titles. He may trade these multiples for items unavailable in his area such as foreign comics, or he may store these multiples for resale at some future date. Such speculation is, of course a gamble, but unless trends change radically in the future the value of certain comics should appreciate greatly, as new generations of readers become interested in collecting. It is important therefore, that comics be stored properly, to protect them from dust, moisture, and other destructive agents. Many collectors store them in polyethylene bags, available at most grocery stores under several trade names. Each bag will easily accomodate a dozen or so issues.(Caution: Leave the ends unsealed to prevent spontaneous combustion.) Comic bags are also available from dealers at a reasonable cost.

Collecting back issues:

In addition to current issues, most collectors want to locate back issues. Some energetic collectors have had great success in running down hoards of rare comics in their home towns. Occasionally, rare items can be located through agencies that collect old newspapers and magazines, such as the Salvation Army. The lucky collectors can very often buy these at less than their market value. Placing advertisements

in trade journals, newspapers etc., can also produce good results. However, don't get discouraged if you are neither energetic or lucky. Most collectors build their collections slowly but systematically by placing mail orders with dealers or other collectors.

Comics of an early vintage are extremely exspensive if they are purchased through a regular dealer or collector, and unless you have unlimited funds to invest in your hobby you will find it necessary to restrict your collecting in certain ways. Every enthusiast defines his collection in a different manner. Some collect runs of special titles. Others collect only selected issues, which carry special stories or work by a favorite artist. Many only collect incomplete runs of their favorite titles, concentrating on certain periods. However you define your collection, you should be careful to set your goals well within your means.

Other Fan Activity:

Collecting is only one of the main activities of comics fans. In fact, many fans have only modest collections. Outside of corresponding with one another, which seems to be a "watermark" of a true fan, many fans spend a great deal of time researching articles, writing, drawing, and producing fanzines. The mania for producing fanzines is very widespread and competes for the time of some of the most ardent collectors. New fans, upon seeing a fanzine for the first time, are often seized with an almost uncontrollable urge to publish their own fanzines. This invariably turns out to be more expensive, and invariably more time consuming than the novice imagines. It also requires a great deal of skill and talent. The prospective ama-publisher is well advised to examine carefully the already large number of existing fanzines, and to contribute to some of them before investing his own time, money, and energy in producing a fanzine.

Where to Buy and Sell:

There are two ways to buy and sell on a national basis. The first is the Comic Convention, a gathering of fans whi which takes place in a multitude of locations every year, the two largest being the ones held in Detroit and New York. There are myriads of smaller ones.

The second market is adzines, magazines put out by fans for the purpose of forming a marketplace for comics. The two largest are the RBCC, 9875 SW 212 St., Miami, Florida 33157, and the Buyer's Guide, RR1, Box 297, East Moline, Illinois 61244. For information, write the respective magazines.

How To Select Fanzines:

In the early sixties, only a few comics fanzines were being published, and a fan could easily subscribe to all of them. Today, the situation has changed radically, and it has become something of a problem to decide which fanzines to order.

Fanzines are not all of equal quality or general interest. Even different issues of the same fanzine may vary significantly. To locate issues that may be of interest to you, learn to look for the names of outstanding amatuer artists, writers, and editors, and consult the various fanzine review columns. Although you may not always agree with the views of the revierers, you will find these reviews to be a valuable source of information about the content and quality of current fanzines. When ordering a fanzine, remember , print runs are small and the issue you want may be sold out. Ordinarily, in this case, you will recieve the nex next issue. Because of irregular publishing schedules that nearly all fanzines must, from necessity, follow, allow up to 90 days or more for your copy to reach you. It is common courtesy to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope when addressing an inquiry to an ama publisher.

Fan Publications of Interest:

AMRA, Box 9120, Chicago, Ill., 60690. For Conan Fans.

The Collector, Bill G. Wilson, 1535 Oneida Dr., Clairton,PA, 15025. Miscellanea for fans.

Comic and Crypt, Mark Sigal, 459 Lyton Blvd., Toronto, 12, Ontario, Canada. Comics and horror.

The Creative Adventure, 83 Irma Ave., Port Washington, N. Y., 11050. Emphasis on the creative aspects of comics.

Cartoonists PROfiles, PO Box 325, Fairfield, Conn. 06430. Although the magazine tends toward newspaper strips, it has recently features Neal Adams and Alex Toth.

Comic Crusader, Box 132, Dedham, Mass. 02026. Largely about golden age comics.

ERBdom, PO Box 550, Evergreen, Colorado, 80439. For Tarzan fans.

Etcetera/The Comic Reader, Paul Levitz, 393 E. 58th St., Brooklyn, New York 11203. Up to the minute news.

Fantastic Fanzine, Gary Groth, 7263 Evanston Rd., Springfield Virginia 22150. One of the be best article zines.

Funnyworld, Mike Barrier, Box 5229 Brady Station, Little Rock Arkansas 72205. Animation and funny animal comics.

Graphic Story Magazine, Bill Spicer, 329 N. Avenue 66, Los

Angelos, CA 90042. Highly recommended.
Graphic Story World, Richard Kyle, Box 16168, Long Beach, CA 90042. The BEST newszine.
I'll Be Damned, Mark Feldman, 328 University Blvd., East, Silver Spring, Maryland 20901.
Menomenee Falls Gazette, N85 W16505 Mary Ct., Menomenee Falls, Wis. 53051. A collection of the world's best newspaper strips.
Phase Magazine, 4314 Clarendon Rd., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11203.
Sense of Wonder, Bill Schelly, 2211 Carol Dr., Lewistown, ID. 83501.
Squa Tront, Roger Hill, 1517 Fairview, Witchita, Kansas 67203. For E.C. Fans.
Witzend, Box 882 Ansonia Station, New York, N.Y. 10023. Pro strips by such people as Wood, Frazetta, Ditko.
Zero Publications, Scott L. Harris, 3056 Ann Street, Baldwin Harbor, N.Y. 11510.

Projects of Interest:
Al Williamson Checklist, and other publications, Promethean Enterprises, 4160 Holly Drive, San Jose, CA 95127.
EC Art Portfolio, Russ Cochran Route 1, Adel, Iowa 50003.
Supergraphics, 218 N. Sixth Street, Reading, Penn. 19601. Send 25¢ for catalog.
Comic Book Price Guide, 2905 Vista Drive, N.W.,Cleveland, Tenn. 37311.

The History of Comic Fandom:

At this point, it is possible to discern two distinct and seperate movements in the history of comics fandom. The first of these began in 1953 as a response to the popular EC line of comics. The first true fanzines were short-lived The EC FAN BULLETIN ran for two issues, FANTASY COMICS for six monthly issues. These were followed by such zines as the EC FAN JOURNAL, and the EC WORLD PRESS. EC fanzines of a wider and more critical scope appeared somewhat later. These included POTRZOBIE and HOOHAH. Potrzebie contributor Ted White discovered at this time that the average EC fan was 9 to 13 in age. Many older fans thought this to be discouraging, and turned to science fiction fandom. While the flourish of fan activities was certainly noteworthy, it can be said that it was never developed into an independent and self sustaining fandom.

The second comics fan movement began about 1960, in response to, and later as a stimulus for the Second Heroic Age of Comics, which most fan historians date from the appearance of the new Flash magazine (# 105, February 1959). The letter dept. of Julius Schwartz of DC, Stan Lee of Marvel, and Bill Harris of Gold Key were most influential in bringing new readers into fandom. Beyond question, it was the reappearance of the costumed hero that sparked the comics fan movement of the sixties. Sparks were lit among science fiction fans first, where experienced fan writers, who were part of an established tradition, produced the first of the series of articles on the comics of the forties - All In Color For A Dime, which was published in XERO, a fanzine for science fiction fans edited and published by Richard Lupoff.

Meanwhile, outside science fiction fandom, Jerry Bails and Roy Thomas, two strictly comics fans of long time standing, concieved the first true comics fanzine of the Second Heroic Age: Alter Ego, which appeared in March 1960. The First several issues were widely circulated among comics fans, and were to influence profoundly the fan movement to come. Unlike the EC movement, this fandom attracted many fan followers in their twenties and thirties. A numberof these older fans had been collectors for years, but had largely been unknown to each other. Joined by scores of new, young fans, this group formed the nucleus of a new movement that is still growing and shows every sign of becoming self-sustaining. Although it had borrowed a few of the more appropriate terms coined by science fiction, Comics Fandom of The Sixties was an independent if fledgling movement, without, in most cases, the advantages and disadvantages of a long tradition. What comics fandom did derive from science fiction fandom was largely due to the double fans and the fanzines they produced such as Don and Maggie Thompson's COMIC ART.

——The End

COMIC BOOK FANS
... COLLECT EVERYTHING!
HERE'S SOME TOILET PAPER USED BY AL WILLIAMSON!
WOW! HE SHITS JUST LIKE ALEX RAYMOND!
I'VE GOT A COMPLETE RUN OF HIS RUNS!!
... ARE VERY DEMANDING -
I JUST WISH..
IF ONLY--
TOO BAD--
HOW ABOUT SOME NEW COMICS BY BARKS
HOW COME STAN LEE DOESN'T EDIT AND INK?
WHY DOESN'T NEAL ADAMS DRAW THOR SPIDERMAN AVENGERS CONAN BATMAN SAD SACK AND ALL THE COVERS
.. HAUNT NEWSSTANDS ..
WHAT'S YOUR DELIVERY DAY?
ANY MORE OF THESE?
FREE PRESS IN YET?
CAN I OPEN A CHARGE ACCOUNT?
I'LL BUY ALL OF THOSE YOU GET
.. PRINT DOZENS OF FANZINES -
PHOTO OFFSET
WRAP AROUND BINDING
FULL COLOR COVER
12 PAGES
IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW
MAILED FLAT
COLOR PAINTING
REVIEWS OF STUFF YOU SAW 2 YEARS AGO
SAME OLD QUARTERLY
WEIRD FAN GRAPHIC FANTASY
.. JERK OFF OVER PICTURES OF DONALD DUCK ..
... ARE USUALLY NAIVE --
WHY COULDN'T THEY MAKE THIS 84 PAGES WITH EIGHT COLORS?
CRUMB SHOULD BE DOING A DAILY STRIP
I'VE NEVER DONE ANY PRO WORK BUT
CHUCK JONES IS A GREAT ANIMATED FILM-MAKER
... IDOLIZE PRO ARTISTS ..
KIRBY HIMSELF STOOD HERE
FOR SALE: PAPER DRINKING CUP USED AND SIGNED BY FRANK FRAZETTA $15.00
.. KISS ASS SHAMELESSLY ..
GEE I DON'T WANT TO SEEM PUSHY BUT COULD I HAVE JUST ONE ORIGINAL?
I'M AN ASSISTANT INKER SO IF YOU EVER NEED ANY HELP
YOUR STUFF IS WORTH MORE THAN $50 PAGE
NOBODY UNDERSTANDS YOU

..HAVE TWO COLLECTIONS: THE STUFF YOU CAN SEE AND THE STUFF THEY HIDE

HERE'S ALL MY ARCHIE COMICS

CASPER RICHIE RICH WACKY RACES

JUGHEAD ANNUALS

--KNOCK MAD MAGAZINE BUT KEEP BUYING FIVE COPIES OF EACH ISSUE...

I WISH SOMEBODY WOULD PUT THIS OUT OF ITS MISERY

BUT THAT'LL BREAK UP MY RUN

SURE IS ROTTEN

ALMOST AS BAD AS CREEPY

.. ARE ALWAYS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE BEST WAY TO STORE ALL THEIR COMICS..

AMBER PLASTIC BAGS WITH A SIDE ZIPPER!

HARD BOUND VOLUMES WITH CASES

SEALED IN LUCITE

SEALED IN BAT GUANO

EC

...ARE USUALLY GUYS NOT GIRLS

I'M ONLY COLLECTING COMICS TO FULFILL SEXUAL DESIRES

I'M MAKING UP FOR THE ONES MY MOTHER THREW OUT

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

-- LATCH ONTO ONE ARTIST AND HARANGUE ABOUT HIM FOREVER--

CARL BARKS

HARVEY KURTZMAN

NEAL ADAMS

ROBT. CRUMB

EISNER

FANTUCCHIO

...ARE STILL LOOKING FOR THE BIG "SECRET"

WHAT KIND OF A PEN DO YOU USE?

IS THERE A SCHOOL THAT TEACHES COMICS?

DOES AN ELECTRIC SHARPENER HELP YOU DRAW BETTER?

WELL GEE I COPIED IT RIGHT FROM A PHOTOGRAPH

..PLAN TO MAKE LOTS OF MONEY BY COLLECTING..

IF I BUY 20 COPIES OF "THOR" NOW FOR 15¢

IN FOUR YEARS I CAN SELL THEM FOR 20¢ EACH! WOW!!

AGGS

.. ARE UNIQUE! NO TWO ALIKE

FIVE COPIES OF MAD NO.1!! MINE! MINE!

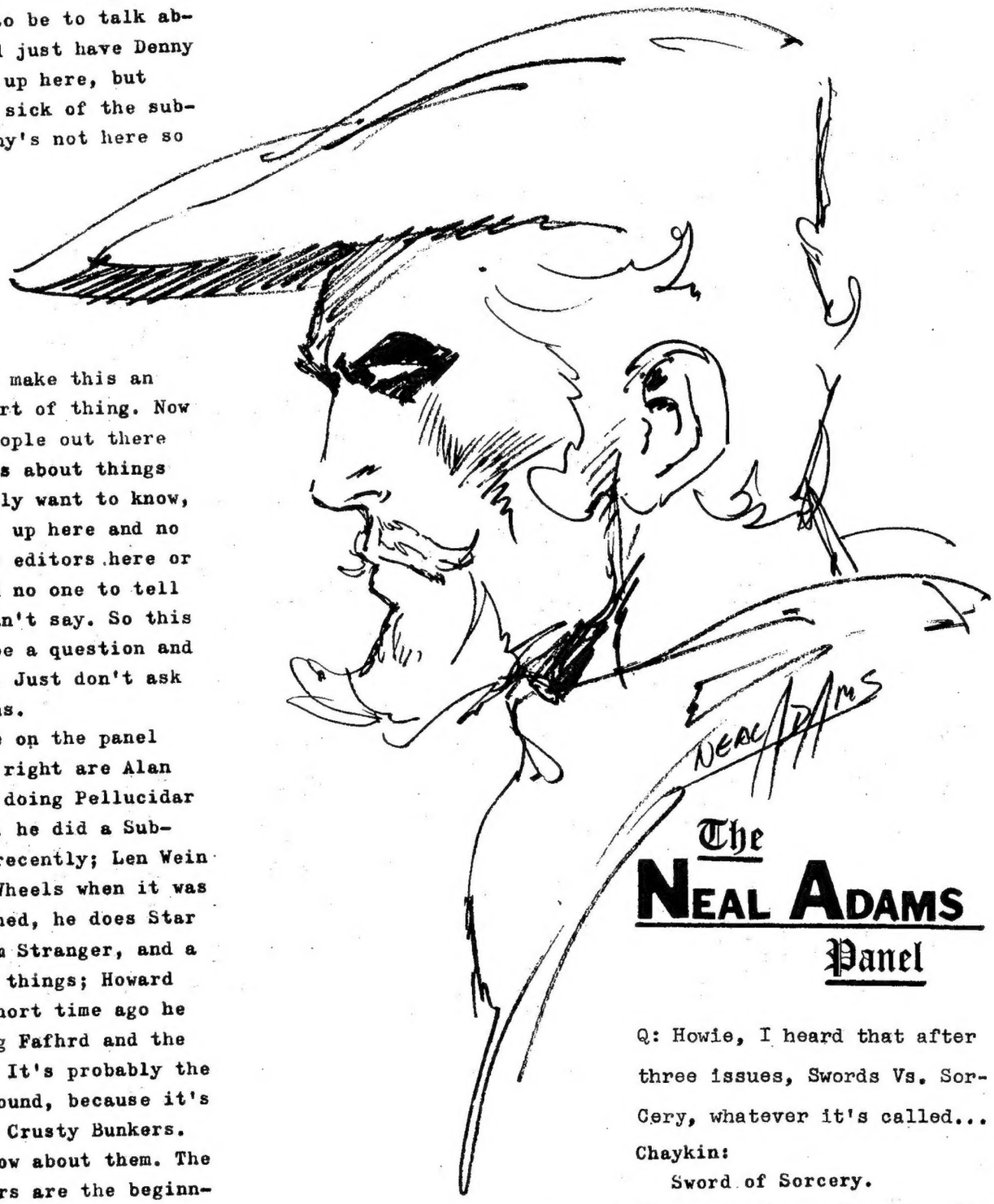
... ARE IMMERSED IN TRIVIA..

THE LAST TWO PANELS OF SPIDERMAN WERE INKED BY MIKE ROYER

JACK KIRBY HAS SWITCHED FROM A G.E. 60 WATT TO A SYLVANIA 75 WATT BULB IN HIS DRAWING LAMP

WHO LETTERED WHIZ #48?

... BUY HUNDREDS OF GOOD PAPERBACKS BUT DON'T READ ANY OF THEM ...
THEY'RE JUST NICE TO HAVE
ANYHOW I SAW THE MOVIE
... ARE VICTIMS OF FATE ..
I JUST PAID TEN BUCKS FOR THIS COPY OF "UNCLE SCROOGE"
.. NOW GOLD KEY REPRINTS THE STORY-
YOU CAN GET IT ANYWHERE FOR 15¢
IF ONLY MY RBCC GOT HERE SOONER
I STOCKED UP ON MARVELS BUT SO DID EVERYBODY
.. KNOW ALL THE OLD STORIES
SUPERMAN WAS REJECTED BY 843 SYNDICATES
CANIFF LEARNED FROM NOEL SICKLES AND ERNIE BUSHMILLER
ALEX TOTH WALKS FUNNY
DOUG WILDEY WEARS ARMY SHOES
CARL BARKS WAS A LUMBERJACK DURING THE CIVIL WAR
... THINK DISNEY IS IT!!
NOW THAT'S ANIMATION
THAT'S REAL ART
THE ONLY WAY TO DO IT
IT'S ALL ON ONES, TOO
PLOT
STORY
FAIRY TALES
YOU CAN'T BEAT THAT!
.. HOLD CONVENTIONS A LOT.
NEW YORK
HOUSTON
KIRK ALYN
DISNEYLAND
SERIALS
KIRBY
FILMS
STERANKO
INFANTINO
STAR TREK
BUD PLANT
BOB SIDEBOTTOM
MIKE ROYER
ROY MIKER
RIKE MOYER
MY ROYKER
MOY RIKER
RYE MOYKER
ROYKE MYER
... HAVE NEVER HEARD OF BOB MERZ ...
WHO'S BOB MERZ?
WHO'S BOB MITCHELL?
WHO'S BOB SWARTHE?
WHO'S BOB KURTZ?
WHO'S BOB BACHMAN?
WHO'S BOB ZAMBONI?
.. ARE SHERIFFS BY DAY ... OUTLAWS BY NIGHT ...
WHAT DOES RICHARD KYLE LOOK LIKE?
WHAT DOES HE DO FOR A LIVING?
IS BILL SPICER FAT OR SKINNY
WILL MILT GRAY EVER WISE UP?
DO DON & MAGGIE SCREW A LOT?
... SHARE THEIR GOODIES ...
HELLO SPICER
.. MIND IF I READ YOUR STACK OF "LITTLE LULUS?"
RUBBER CEMENT
VINCENT DAVIS



The NEAL ADAMS Panel

Adams:

The purpose of this panel was supposed to be to talk about GL/GA, and just have Denny O'Neil and me up here, but we're both so sick of the subject that Denny's not here so we decided to make this an open ended sort of thing. Now all of you people out there have questions about things that you really want to know, and we're all up here and no publishers or editors here or anything, and no one to tell us what we can't say. So this is going to be a question and answer thing. Just don't ask dumb questions.

The people on the panel from left to right are Alan Weiss, who's doing Pellucidar for National, he did a Sub-Mariner job recently; Len Wein who did Hot Wheels when it was being published, he does Star Trek, Phantom Stranger, and a lot of other things; Howard Chaykin. A short time ago he started doing Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser. It's probably the best book around, because it's inked by the Crusty Bunkers. You don't know about them. The Crusty Bunkers are the beginning of a legend. They're a bunch of people who, when a job is late, gather around in the middle of night and finish it. There's Ralph Reeseback-grounds, Neal Adams heads, Al Weiss figures. The first issue of the Grey Mouser is going to be one of these things that you can just sit around for hours figuring out who did what. Howie's come along real fast, scaring everyone. Mike Kaluta, who does what I think is the best thing being done with the Edgar Rice Burroughs stuff, Carson of Mars. I like Kubert's Tarzan and a lot of the other stuff, but Carson of Venus is the top.

Okay, start the questions. Anybody for anybody.

Q: Howie, I heard that after three issues, Swords Vs. Sorcery, whatever it's called...

Chaykin:

Sword of Sorcery.

Q: after six months, is going to be stopped to look at sales, before they decide to continue the book?

Chaykin:

That isn't exactly the way I heard it. The way I got it, they'll give it three issues, and if it goes, it'll continue and it if doesn't, they'll drop it. That's all I know.

Denny O'Neil, the editor, is not really happy with the arrangement, and he's going in before three issues are up, and fight to have it continued before they decide to discontinue it.

Q: Mr. Adams, how do you feel about artists doing the cover of a magazine and not the inside work?

Adams:

I felt bad about it for a long time, until I looked through Steranko's History, and saw all those beautiful covers and then looked through the books and saw all that rotten artwork. I think it's just a tradition. They want to sell books so they put a good cover on it. I stopped doing covers, you probably noticed I haven't been doing a lot of covers for DC lately. For a lot of different reasons. Phantom Stranger, for instance, I like to see Jim Aparo do his own cover because he's a marvellous artist. The guys who do the insid insides know what the story's about, and if they do the covers, they're going to tell you what the book's about, by doing that sort of cover, and it's a better thing all around

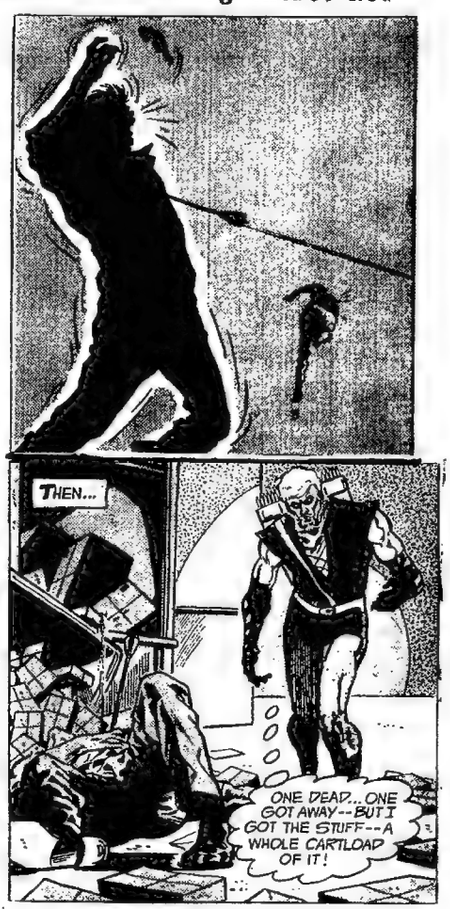
Q: Mr. Adams. Will you be doing any work for Marvel in the near future?

Adams:

I'm doing War of the Worlds for Marvel. I want to do a character that if I have my way is going to be called the Junkman. He's a character that after the Martians have won the war the second time, has decided on his own to try to put civilization back together again, by collecting things that civilization made that were good, and in some way give it to the right people, so that they can help build civilization back up again. It is kind of an idiotic crusade, and everybody thinks he's crazy, and everybody, I hope, will call him the Junkman. He's a real hero type. He's tall and hansome, all kinds of muscles and stuff like that, and I want to call him the Junkman.

Q:This is to Neal. Have there been any repercussions from the recent Brave and the Bold where Green Arrow was shown killing a man?

Adams: I don't know how many of you know about that. In the Brave and the Bold, there's a sequence in which Green Arrow takes out his bow, takes an arrow out, and shoots it into the heart of a fleeing gunman, uh, I don't think he was fleeing, I think he's just kind of standing there. Now



the other guy gets away, and GA goes up and says, "well, got one and the other one got away." Now if any of you follow Green Lantern-Green Arrow, you know that's really not the character of Green Arrow. I mean, he wouldn't do that sort of thing a whole lot. Now there are writers in this field, and there are writers, and some of them don't read the other guy's work. The writer who wrote that didn't read our comic books. One of the aspects of Marvel that I really admire, is that all the writers read the other guy's work, and they have respect for the other guy's work. That is happening a lot more at DC, but there's still things like that Green Arrow thing. Denny, by the way, is trying to make up by having Green Arrow accidentally kill someone, and showing what he'd really go through if he killed someone even by accident. Denny really cares about the character.

Q: For Mike Kaluta. How much do you draw from memory, and what do you use for reference?

Kaluta:

I don't know if I can give a percentage on how much is memory, and how much isn't. You mean photographs, stuff like that? Very little referance, very little. I fake cars and trucks and although I know they'll look a lot better if I just lift them out of a magazine, but I'm either lazy or too proud to do it, I don't know which.

Q: Mike Kaluta. Will you be doing anything in the underground aside from the Crusty Bunkers stuff?

Kaluta:

What's underground format? You mean printed in an underground format?

Q: Yeah. Like the stuff you started out with in Gothic Blimp?

Kaluta:

I don't know. I'll do the fairy tales which I put in fanzines. I'd like to see them spread around more, so that people who don't know what comics are can see them as fairy tales.

Q:Len Wein. Are you the permanent Justice League scripter now, and, if so, what are your long range plans for the strip?

Wein:

Well, I'm permanent until something better comes along. I dunno. I want to have fun. I want to make the Elongated Man a Justice League member. I'm bringing Eclipso back. I'm just going to do things I always wanted to see done. I'll be doing things with the Red Tornado. I'm just going to have fun.

Q: Len Wein. Do you think the Justice League is too weak? In the last couple years they've subtracted members, Green Lantern's gone down in power, So has Superman, and in general all your characters have been limited in their abilities.

Wein:

I don't think making the Elongated Man is going to add that much power to the group. I just wanted to have some fun and I've always dug the character, and they needed a sense of humor in that group. But no actually, they're fine. They can do as muchas I'm really inclined to do with them.

Wein:

I usually end up with my head somewhere between my knees. The JLA, that early issue of Justice League that had letters from Roy Thomas and Jerry Bails introduced me to fandom, and after reading those letters I joined fandom, and did my own fanzine which led me to writing, and now I feel that it's gone full circle. I enjoy the Justice League. I find that I sit down and think a lot before I start writing, and figure out how everyone relates to who, and how. I find that it needs a lot more thought than other books.

Adams:

Someone mentioned the X-Men and I hear that Marvel's going to be doing the X-Men again, but I don't know who'll be doing it. I hope they put someone good on it, but I don't think it'll be me.

I have one comment about the underground. There's a lot of soul searching going on these days by artists whether or not they should plug along doing straight comics, or get rich doing undergrounds. I don't know, undergrounds look pretty good, folks.

Q: Mr. Kaluta. Will you be doing any strips besides Carson of Venus?

Kaluta:

Sure, why not? Actually, we are working on one now, I wont say too much about it. It's a new back feature for the Phantom Stranger.

Q: Howie Chaykin and Alan Weiss. What will you be doing in the near futube?

Chaykin:

I am at this moment working on a comics project outside of comics. I'm doing a strip for Mike Freidrich's underground book, and I'm doing something with Samuel Art Layne.

Weiss:

I have a couple of strips t that aren't out yet that I've finished for Marvel. The Rawhide Kid, which will be out in September or October, and a Sub-Mariner, which should be out by the end of July. I've got a strip coming out in Mike Friedrich's book, the one Howie mentioned. It's an underground book done by overground people. It's tentative title is Crusty Comics.

Chaykin:

It's a very bulky book.

Weiss:

I'll be doing a strip called Ace The Ace and The Wild Butterflies. Spicy Brown is in it, and Yancy Yabminski, and possibly Skybuck Dent.

Q: Wher can we get it?

Weiss:

Nowhere. You won't be able to get it for a while, but I'm sure Friedrich will have enough advertising around so that you can't miss it. Neal is doing the cover.

Q:Len Wein. Will you be doing any more Superman stories, particularily the Private Life of Clark Kent stories, which I thought you handled very well?

Wein:

Thank you. I've got another Superman coming out in September, but after that I haven't written another Superman. Everyone wants me to, but I just don't have the time. Cary Bates has some private life stories coming up. I've seen them, they're great.

Q: Are you planning to bring back the Spectre in any magazines?

Wein:

No.

Q: Len Wein. How has your art training helped you in your writing?

Wein:

I can imagine things visually first before I write them. It makes it a lot easier on my part.

Q: Will you be bringing back the Vigilante?

Wein:

Oh, yeah. As a matter of fact, he'll be in the next Brave and the Bold with Batman.

Adams:

He'll probably end up shooting someone with an arrow

Q: Is The Academy of Comic Book Arts working to solve the problems of the field?

Adams:

The question was, do I think that because of the Academy, will there be a working together to solve problems? Well, what's been done up to now is, well for an example, the relevancy that's been forced into comics has been a result of ACBA. There's a lot happening at Archie Comics, and a lot more at Marvel and DC that's grown out of conversations that we've had at the Academy. I don't know what's going to come from the Academy in the way of comics. I know that there's a better feeling toward comics now. It's a feeling, and that comradery or whatever it is the Academy is trying to produce, is causing there to be a lot more comics on the stands. There's more now than in 1955. Whether that is affecting it, or whether some outside force that we don't know about is affecting it, we know that we're trying to make comic books better through the Academy. We're not trying to hurt, we're not trying to put anyone out of business. We're trying to do a good job at what we do, and if it's working, great.

Q: You said that you're trying to make comics better, but a lot of new comics are just bad and old comics like Spider-Man are just going down the drain.

Adams:

Well... comic books are only as good as the talent that produces them. Get after some of your friends who think they're good artists and tell them to get their asses moving. The field can use good artists who know how to communicate.

Q: Len Wein, does the new PS backup feature mean that you are giving Dr. 13 the shaft?

Wein:

Not exactly. He's part of the new strip.

Q: There's a rumor going around that DC is bringing back Captain Marvel...

Wein:

It's not a rumor. It's true

Q:... are you going to put Captain Marvel in the JLA?

Wein:

No. We were going to have him fight Superman in World's Finest. We had maybe a fight between the two planned.

Q: Can you give us dome information on the Shadow and Swamp Thing?

Wein:

The first Swamp Thing is on sale in August. I wrote it, Berni Wrightson drew it, and it's absolutely beautiful. The Shadow - Berni Wrightson is drawing that also, and I'm writing it. It isn't beautiful yet, because he hasn't drawn it, and I haven't written it, but it will be when we're done.

ALL THE POWERS OF THE GREATEST MEN IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD HAVE BEEN GATHERED TOGETHER AND PLACED IN THE HANDS OF THE BOY REPORTER, BILLY BATSON. WHEN HE PRONOUNCES THE NAME OF THE ANCIENT WIZARD SHAZAM HE BECOMES, IN A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHTNING, THE MIGHTY CAPTAIN MARVEL!
SOLOMON... WISDOM
HERCULES.. STRENGTH
ATLAS..... STAMINA
ZEUS..... POWER
ACHILLES... COURAGE
MERCURY... SPEED

Q: Neal Adams. The National Lampoon people said the Son O'God is coming out in two different things. Will you be doing it?

Adams:

I don't know what you mean by two different things. I'm going to be doing Son O'God. Eventually it's going to be a book.

Q: Len Wein. Before you said that you were going to put the Elongated Man in the JLA. How about putting Adam Strange in the JLA?

Wein:

I would like to put everyone in, but I wouldn't sleep at night. I just finished a 3-parter with 36 superheroes, and I followed it up with, I don't remember how many guststars are in it, but the issue afterwards has the Phantom Stranger in it.

Q: Len Wein. What will you be doing with Cassandra Craft?

Wein:

She's going to be coming back. Cassandra Craft, someone just asked, was in one of the early Phantom Stranger stories and she's coming back, not in the issue that just came out, but in the one after that, on sale in September. I have a 5-part series going with Tala, and Tannarak, and anyone else I can think of. I'm just going to play around for a bit, try and make it easier on myself.

Q: Will Alan Hanley be working on Capatain Marvel?

Wein: I don't think so.

Adams:

Almost any questions about Captain Marvel, there are really no answers. As far as I know, no finished artwork has been prepared. The latest rumor is they're trying to get C. C. Beck.

Q: Are there going to be any more giants from DC or Marvel?

Adams:

Somebody said it didn't make any money. I don't know.

Q: Len Wein. I have a question about the Shadow. Alex Toth said that you'll be updating it, that you're not keeping it in the thirties. Is this true?

Wein:

It'll be in the thirties. We'll try to keep it as close to the pulps, not the radio show, as we can. We'll be using a little artistic license, because people who buy the comic will remember the radio show. So we'll be keeping Lamont Cranston, and Margo Lane, and Shrevvy, the cab driver.

Q: Who does the coloring in comics?

Adams:

You never know who the colorists are. Usually it's because all the credits are listed on the page, then the page is sent to the photostater, & after the stats come back, the page is colored. Now they cant put down "colored by so-and-so" because it's a foregone conclusion that that page is finished. Lately more and more artists are trying to do their own coloring. The big difficulty is that the coloring is not the same as coloring a painting or an illustration. You have to know how it's done because it's a scientific process, and how beautiful it's going to be or not going to be is secondary. I wish there was some way we could teach all the artists what this process is, so we could depend on all

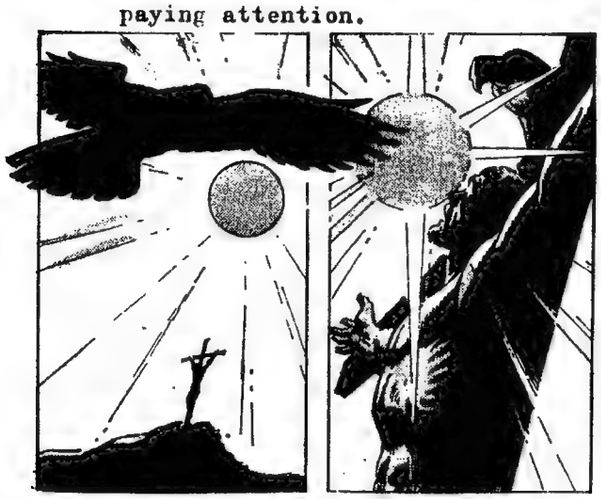
the artists to do their own coloring. It would still be up to the publishers, I guess, whether they wanted their coloring, or a lot of bright or dull colors. Right now, it's a battle.

TomPalmer does his own coloring. I do my own coloring for the most part. When Berni Wrightson did the coloring to the first Swamp Thing, in every sense the problem came up. He didn't know what the problems were, and he had to have somebody go over it afterward. I think he'll learn more about it next time around.

Q: What do you think of the artists like Sam Glanzman and Russ Heath? They're great, but you never hear anything said about them?

Adams:

If something is to be said for these good artists, especially Russ Heath, I think he's far and away one of the best artists around, if something is to be said for them, get off your duffs and say something about them. You're the ones who vote for the awards going around every year. I never hear Russ's name mentioned. Somebody must be buying the war stuff, it's selling like crazy. So stop ignoring him. All the artists I know think Russ is one of the best. It's you goofs out there who aren't paying attention.



Q: How do people make mominations for the ACBA awards?

Adams:

Somebody sends in a ballot. Actually, someone nominates someone, you, know, and I haven't seen Russ's name on one of those lists yet, and I dont like you people for it.

Q: Neal Adams. I hear you're doing a tomb of Dracula? Is that true?

Adams:

I have an alternate book that doesn't have a deadline in the Dracula series for Marvel, the Origin of Dracula. I'll do it when I get to it.

Q: I heard that Marvel is doing the Shadow too.

Adams:

Let me try and clear up the Shadow thing right now. Now, the way I get the story, Marvel was trying to buy the Shadow, and National was trying to buy the Shadow, and for some reason, the guy Marvel was talking to was not talking to the guy DC was talking to, and the guy that DC was talking to gave the other guy the idea that DC was buying the newspaper strip rights, and they were buying the comic book rights. It's all straightened out now. National has the Shadow, and Marvel is out in the cold. There was all sorts of fooling around, and it didn't stop until someone signed a contract.

Q: Len Wein. How are you going to make Swamp Thing different from all the other mud monsters that are running around?

Wein:

That's a good question. We are the only one doing it with Berni Wrightson, that's part of it. We've got the first six issues done, and there are no two alike. He's world travell-

ing in the first few issues, and he'll be in all different kinds of stories, so we can find out who wants to see what happen. Then we'll settle down in one direction. It's going to be a damn good comic book, if I do say so myself. I do. It's incredible stuff.

Q: Neal Adams: Your stuff looks so much better in DC that it dows in Marvel comics. Do they use cheaper paper for their stuff than National?

Adams:

It's the same stuff. If it looks different, it was probably a bad shipment. As far as I know, it's the same stuff.

Q: With all the old characters coming back, The Shadow and Capt. Marvel and all that, if you could do any pulp hero, which one would each of you do?

Chaykin:

I could dig doing Operator 5. Or G-8.

Wein:

If there's someone left, I'd like to do the Avenger. It's out in paperback now. It was a great character.

Adams:

It seems to me that we should be coming up with new characters. Most of that stuff is really for nostalgia creeps

BEST WISHES
FROM
BIG BARDA
JACK KIRBY

like us. I don't think any 12-year old kid is going to be interested in 1930s cars. Anyway, I'd like to do Doc Savage or Tarzan, the really standout characters.

Q: Neal Adams. Are you going to be bringing the Joker back as a homosexual?

Adams:

How is that story getting around? Yes, there's going to be a new Joker story. I remember the Joker as a homicidal maniac whose sexual leanings I suspected. I read the script, and it's about a homicidal maniac whose sexual leanings I suspect. Denny read back to find out what he's really like and he's done it, boy! He's bad. He's crazy!

Q: Neal Adams. In the Deadman comeback will you be doing the artwork?

Adams:

If he comes back in Brave and the Bold, I will not be drawing him. If he comes back as a seperate feature that I can write and draw, I'LL do it. I suspect that some other people besides Mr. Kirby will be doing the character before I get another crack at it. I do not think that Jack did too much good with what he's been trying with Deadman, but if and when I do it again, it'll be my character.

Q: Are comic companies trying to destroy collectors? Everyone's expanding, and it bankrupts me every month. Are they going to cut down to just a few books, and then say no more?

Adams:

I think you ought to go broke. If you do, if every kid in America goes broke, ask your parents for a bigger allowance so you can buy more comic books.

Q: Does anyone know anything about the New Adventure Comics?

Wein:

I know a little bit about it. Joe Orlando's planning all kinds of different stuff. There's a pirate strip, and a superhero strip, and science fiction. Adventure Comics. That's what it's called and that's what it's going to be. We'll do strips until people don't like them, and then we will replace them with something else. It's going to be a lot of fun.

Q: If there are so many bad books out today, how come the bad writers that you're so careful not to mention the names of, How come a guy who can't do as good work as the people who are producing the good stuff stays in the business?

Adams:

Well, if you use a standard that says everyone has to be as good as Al Williamson, then only Al Williamson will work. You have to have a certain amount of flexibility. There are a lot of things that have been printed in comics that, well, I don't know if they belong there, but comics have been in such a state lately, that enough variety of quality can be produced to be bought by the reader. Now, as long as it's bought, the people who make it are going to be used. Through their being used, they will get better. If this didnt happen, they would never have a chance, they would go into some other field, and do something else. There has to be room in the field for guys who are not quite as good as other guys. There has to be room for guys who are just getting off bad, and are going to get good. There is room now, and I insist that anyone who is half decent can get a job in comic books today. Maybe people won't like his stuff for a while, maybe a year ago, Howie Chaykin's stuff wouldn't appear in comics.

Q: You mentioned Bob Brown as one lousy artist...

Adams:

I mentioned Bob Brown? I happen to like Bob Brown.

Q: Well, you said he didn't turn out good stuff.

Adams:

No. What I said about Bob Brown is that he's getting the wrong scripts. I'm sure I said that. Bob Brown has editors who don't understand him. He could really have a good time over at Marvel. I hope no one tells him that, because National would lose a good artist. Maybe he'll get a good editor at DC, and some good stories. This fits into a big grey area that really doesn't mean anything, which has to do with the day-to-day business of making comic books. I have to take you down to the offices to show you, and I'm not going to

SWIFTLY, DEADMAN'S EYES SCAN THE ALREADY YELLOWING PAGE...
Although the hoodlum surrendered without a fight, Detective Riley began pummeling him unmercifully...
The incident was observed by two witnesses...one of them, Peter Bones, a former boxer...

do that, okay?

Is that Denny? Somebody go and get Denny.

Ladies and gentlemen, Denny O'Neil.

Q: Will they be making Superman and the other characters into more human beings?

O'Neil:

Well, it's up to the individual writers and editors. They can do whatever they want to. I don't know, you'ld have to ask them.

Adams:

Wait, just a minute everyone. He's coming. Steve Skeates. For anyone who doesn't know who Steve Skeates is, congradulations.

Q: Denny O'Neil. This month Fafhrd and The Grey Mouser appeared in Wonder Woman. Why did you do this? I thought that fantasy heroes weren't goingg to meet superheroes.

O'Neil:

It seemed like a good idea at the time. I wanted to plug Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser somewhere, and we didn't happen to have an ending for that particular story, and when it came time to write the last page, I did it by dictating over the phone to Dick Giordano and I thought why don't I put in Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser and that's why we did it.

Q: Will Green Lantern and Green Arrow be coming back in October?

O'Neil:

No. They'll be coming back in The Flash.

Q: Denny O'Neil. When you were working for Charlton, you made a back up feature for the Cheyanne Kid. Where did you get the idea?

O'Neil:

Wow. I wish I could think of a way to bring him back. Bring back the Wanderer with Jim Aparo's art. Anyway, Dick Giordano, the then editor, came to me and said we needed three new western features by the end of the next week. Wanderer was one of them. Wanderer was this traveling salesman from Sirius-5 who crashlanded in the old West, and he runs into a W.C. Fields character and this Gabby Hayes character and I think the premise was that he was searching the west for parts to repair his spaceship with. After Jim and I left, another writer-artist took over, and he eventually fixed fixed his ship, or got rescued by another ship.

Q: How was the reaction to that Batman story where you ended the Creeper's superhero life?

O'Neil:

The Ditko fans hated me, and other that that it was generally favorable. I always though, when I was writing the Creeper, that he was always more naturally a villain than a hero, and so I used him as a villain.

Q: I hear they're bringing back Wonder Woman as an Amazon?

O'Neil:

I don't know anything except I heard that too.

Adams:

And to think, in our lifetime.

Q: What's become of Marvel's Solomon Kane strip?

Adams:

As far as I know, Ralph Reese is doing the first Solomon Kane story, and I think he is going to continue on it.

Q: Everyone knows the need for new talent, but how are you supposed to get into the feild when people like Murray Boltinoff say things like " I wish you goddam little kids would stop sending unsolicited manuscripts?

Adams:

Okay, I've got an answer for you. One day a long time ago, DC was the only company around. And when you're on top you can gradually let the quality of work slip, and you can let artists like Joe Kubert and Alex Toth go away, and you end up with Carmine Infantino, who decides to look for work at Marvel, and Murphy Anderson who decides to work for Walt Disney, and you end up with nobody else around. Now, to match these standards, you need editors of that caliber, who will do the type of work that is called for in this situation. But when a company starts to beat you out, you have to change, so maybe the leadership falls on Carmine Infantino, and you get good artists and writers and a lot of new people, and you accept a lot of new ideas, and, sometimes, the guys who were around in the old days, decide that they should stick around and do their job, and pick up their checks.

Murray Boltinoff is still doing his job. I don't know. History may prove him right. It may be that that attitude is the attitude which will prevail, where you don't have to worry about the next guy, that you won't need new artists and writers. Now, when they get good enough, when all the other editors put up with them until they're really good,

then Murray is there in case they need extra work.

O'Neil:

Not in defense of anyone, or in contradiction to what Neal said, but, as an editor, sometimes the unsolicited scripts and artwork can get to be a real drag. 90% of it is bad, unusable, and there are frequently legal complications with what is usable. For example, you must be willing to sell away all of the rights to your work, your characters, and so forth, were we to use something. I personally try to read everything that comes in, but mostly it's hopeless.

Q: I worked with some people on a series that we'd like to get going somewhere. How would we do this?

O'Neil:

Well, I would suggest that you make an appointment, do a very formal number, and go see Carmine Infantino at 3PM on a Thursday afternoon. He says it is not only company policy that they are willing to buy your stuff, but are willing to give the creators the same deal that Bob Kane got with Batman, which has made him more than a millionaire over the years. I know a lot of people who have gone in with stuff, & none of it was accepted on those terms, but theoretically the offer's open.

Be very professional about it. You have to play the corporate structure game, and go through secretaries, setting the thing up formally and so forth. You can't just send it in through the mail.

Q: What's it like working for Marvel? Do they make you do wild layouts, or can you do what you like?

Adams:

Well, there are certain standards. Clarity, good drawing, etc. When you're talking specifically about someone like John Buscema, John is a special case. Jack Kirby left Marvel, and they needed someone to replace Jack Kirby, to do the things that Kirby did. John Buscema was willing to take additional money to do what Jack Kirby did. Now I'll agree that John hurt himself by doing that, that nothing he has done lately is as good as his old Avengers stuff. Roy Thomas tells me John's stuff is now getting better and better.

It's a business, like everything else. If you don't want to conform to some of the regulations, you don't have to work in it. Those guys who pay your check are responsible to you and all the people who work around the office, and I don't say that's an excuse, it is just a setup that's been created. I don't see any artistic restrictions on someone like Berni Wrightson. Some of the things he's doing now that he wasn't doing before, He's doing because he found a better way. I was kicked several times for doing crazy layouts, and I didn't change until I decided that it was going to be more fun to knock it down a bit and do something else.

Q: At DC, there is a variety of styles, whereas at Marvel, everyone imitates Jack Kirby.

Adams:

Do you really see that happening so much any more? See, you used to go into Stan's office, and he'd say, "Look at this Kirby artwork. Isn't that great?", and you'd say, "Yeah. That's really nice. I really like it.", and he'd say, "Now that's the way to tell a story isn't it?", and he'd get right down on top of you. And you'd think" Well, maybe I could do something like that. A little Kirby couldn't hurt." Now at National, most of the editors don't worry about how the art affects the story, except that it's clear. So you get a lot of varying attitudes and style and more chances to do different kinds of things. Marvel's coming around. Roy Thomas is doing quite a good job up there. He lets guys like Mike Ploog do what they want, and Barry Smith is doing things like 15 panels to a page, like that. That's pretty free.

Q: You say that there's room for new artists. What do art students need to become good comic book artists?

Chaykin: Insanity.

Adams:

I don't know. I think comic book artists are like, art junkies. A guy is unhappy, so he figures if he becomes a junkie he'll only be unhappy 50% of the time. Or he sits behind a board and draws a lot, so he's happy 50% of the time, so that is what he does. That's how it starts, some guy goes crazy one day and becomes an artist, and keeps doing it year after year.

How does he become an artist? Since Alex Toth has taken me to task for this, the first thing I would say is storytelling. But I think the most important thing is to learn how to draw. If you don't know how to draw, no one will give a damn. If you can do all the compositions, and you can do all of these marvellous zip-a-tone things, if you hold the page 15 feet away, and it looks like a really professional, what you need to do is find out what skills are involved,

and decide that you're not going to be as good as the worst artist around, you're going to be better that the best around then, at some point along the way, you will be good enough to be professional, and there is no way to tell when that will be. A lot of guys are on their way, professionals will search you out if they see that you are doing the kind of things you should be doing. But it's just like in art, no one can teach you how to draw. You learn how to draw. They can give you information, they can tell you how a body is built, but if you don't draw it right, no one's going to be able to do anything for you.

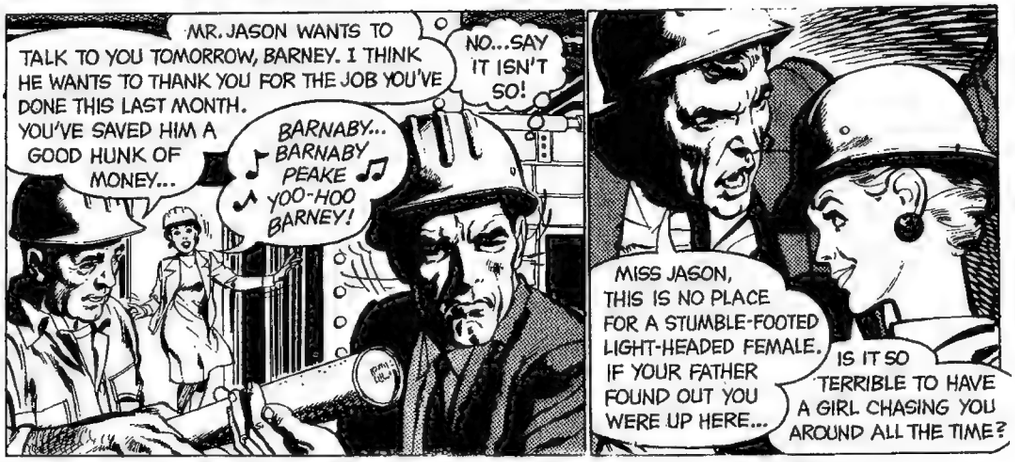
Q: There's a lot of commercial artists around, but not all of them have what it takes to be a good comic book artist.

Adams:

Well, I don't say that a commercial artist is necessarily an artist. I don't mean can he trace photographs well, or can he make good designs. Commercial art is really a bad field these days. If you're a good comic book artist, you can make money anytime. It may not be the best money, but at least it's steady. If you do a good job, there will always be work, and if you do a bad job, you won't be working. If you' are as good an artist as Bob Peake is, become a commercial artist. If you like to tell stories, if you want to entertain a million kids, if you want to do a story that will reach a million kids, if you want to tell them something, become a comic book artist. If you want to draw pretty pictures for shirt manufacturers, become a commercial artist.

Q:Recently I saw a thing called Tangent, which was a newspaper strip you were supposed to do?

TANGENT: by Neal Adams


MR. JASON WANTS TO TALK TO YOU TOMORROW, BARNEY. I THINK HE WANTS TO THANK YOU FOR THE JOB YOU'VE DONE THIS LAST MONTH. YOU'VE SAVED HIM A GOOD HUNK OF MONEY...
NO...SAY IT ISN'T SO!
BARNABY... BARNABY PEAKE YOO-HOO BARNEY!
MISS JASON, THIS IS NO PLACE FOR A STUMBLE-FOOTED LIGHT-HEADED FEMALE. IF YOUR FATHER FOUND OUT YOU WERE UP HERE...
IS IT SO TERRIBLE TO HAVE A GIRL CHASING YOU AROUND ALL THE TIME?

Adams:

There's not much information. I had a strip at one time, and it was agreed that I **would** do another strip, but I **really** didn't try, I just put it together, and it wasn't any good.

Q: I really liked your Avengers sequence where the Kree fought the Skrulls. Will you be doing the Avengers again?

Adams:

No. Jim Starlin is doing the Avengers now. Jim Starlin, dis guy just dropped outa da blue. He's good. He draws good pictures, and he started out on Iron Man. They liked his stuff so much they switched him to The Avengers. Really good stuff.

Q: Do you think DC could have done a better job on Conan?

Adams:

No. I think that Barry Smith did the best goddam job. I have a lot of respect for my work, but I really couldn't have done that kind of job. It's damned good.

Q: About the Rutland parade. I hear that Marvel and DC are each going to have a red volkswagon...

Wein:

It's a red mustang.

Q:... How did you make the arrangements for this?

Wein:

It's nothing really. This years Rutland stories are vaguely correlated. Marvel's done a couple, and I'm doing one for theJLA, and there's a running subplot for all of them. It doesn't have anything to do with the main action. It concerns Gerry Conway, Steve Englehart, and me.

Q: What's the difference between the two big companies, and the little companies?

O'Neil:

It has to do mostly with money. If you had a choice between getting $4 a page or $20 a page, and you were kind of proud of your work, which one would you take? At Charlton, when we left, Steve Skeates & I were their highest paid writers. I was getting $6 a page, and Steve was getting $5. Basically, the companies who were paying more hired all the good people.

Q: What about Steve Ditko?

O'Neil:

Why is Steve Ditko working for Charlton? The reason is that Steve Ditko has certain political philosophies that don't agree with the philoso-

phies of...

Chaykin:

... Anyone in the world.

O'Neil:

Right! He's tried various times to work at DC, and it's just that his political philosophies got in the way, and editors got mad at him, and he got mad at editors, and he quit. That's where his head is at. He just refused to do anything which didn't get across his political ideas.

HONEST MEN DON'T DEAL WITH KNOWN THIEVES. IT CAN ONLY LEAD TO CORRUPTING THAT WHICH IS HONEST! I INTEND TO PROVE KROE AND ORD ARE TWO OF A KIND! SINCE I KNOW WHAT TO DO, I WON'T BE TIED TO ORD!

Q: Ana Gost Manor will?

O'Neil:

Basically, Steve Ditko does not like associating witha bunch of commie fags, which includes everyone in this room

Q: Are you going to bring back the Blackhawks?

Wein:

How about getting Reed Crandall to do it?

Chaykin:

How about getting Russ Heath to do the Blackhawks?

Wein:

This is a personal quest that Howie and I have been going through.

Chaykin:

We had dinner together once and decided that being longhaired pinkos, it would be fun to do a fascist comic strip. We mentioned it to Carmine Infantino, and Mike Kaluta mentions it the first of every month, and it's been turned down, but we won't hang it up. Anybody here seen Gray Morrow illustrating the Blackhawks? You poor schmucks.

Q: Is there any chance for Son O'God to come out regularily?

Adams:

Yeah. Every Christmas.

Chaykin:

Every Easter.

Q: Who wrote the scripts for Tower Comcis?

Skeates:

Wally Wood, Len Wein, and myself wrote most of them.

Q: What happened to the characters in Tower Comics? Who owns them?

Skeates:

I believe so. Tower was just bought by Belmont, and they have no plans for bringing them back.

Chaykin:

DC may buy them.

Adams:

Why not? They've bought everything else.

Q: Is there any hope of reviving Bat Lash?

O'Neil:

Yeah. I'm trying to talk Carmine into doing a more or less straight western called Kid Lash, which would be about Bat Lash's younger brother, the Bounty Hunter. So Bat Lash would always be around. If that doesn't happen, we may do some mew stories for Weird Western.

Q: Denny O'Neil. YOU're writing Capt. Marvel. Will you leave him in arealm of fantasy or make him more realistic?

O'Neil:

No realism. I read about 150 of those old stories, and I was so thoroughly charmed by them that I felt there was no was to improve upon the character.

Q: Does DC have the rights to all the Capt. Marvel stuff?

O'Neil:

We have all the rights to all the Captain Marvel characters, including Mary Marvel, Captain Marvel,Jr., and Hoppy the Marvel Bunny.

Q: By some quirk of fate, is there going to be a fight between Superman and Captain Marvel?

Adams:

They were going to have a race between Superman, Captain Marvel, and the Flash.

O'Neil:

We changed our minds, and decided not to do anything. I was going to do a story where we would have made some situation where they had to fight. Of course, Captain Marvel would have won because he's magic, and magic can stop Superman. But, on sober second thought, we decided that it was a bad idea, and we aren't going to do it after all.

Wein:

There is going to be a sort of Captain Marvel-Superman fight in the Justice League. It's very strange. I'm not going to say any more, except that it's in the Rutland issue.

Adams: O.K. Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you from the Neal Adams panel.

:::

DC News and Reviews

DC is bringing back the original Captain Marvel in a book called SHAZAM. The stories will be done by Denny O'Neil and the original artist C.C. Beck.

Neal Adams will no longer be doing Green Lantern/ Green Arrow. Green Lantern will back up the FLASH, and Green Arrow will alternate in ACTION COMICS

Tarzan 215 will be a Hal Foster reprint issue.

A new series, The Human Target, will begin in ACTION COMICS 219 and will alternate with GA.

Detective Comics will alternate The Elongated Man, Hawkman, and The Atom with the Jason Bard strip.

DC's new sword and sorcery book will be called SWORD OF SORCERY and will feature Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser by Denny O'Neil, and new artist Howard Chaykin.

ADVENTURE COMICS, vacated by Supergirl who got her own magazine, will feature no continuing characters, but straight adventure stories.

PHANTOM STRANGER 23 will begin a new backup feature called The Spawn of Frankenstien, by Len Wein and Mike Kaluta.

Beginning in Weird Worlds 4, John Carter will be done by Sal Amendola and Mike Kaluta will do Pellucidar.

TEEN TITANS will be discontinued.

The NEW GODS will return in a paperback format.

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

The Beast will be discontinued with AMAZING ADVENTURES 16, and will be replaced with War of the Worlds by Neal Adams and Gil Kane.

The X-MEN will be appearing in original stories in their own magazine soon.

THE AVENGERS will henceforth be drawn by Don Heck and Dave Cockrum

Gullivar of Mars will last appear in Creatures on the Loose 21, to be replaced by Lin Carter's Thongar The Barbarian.

Books to be coming from Marvel are Frankenstien, Jekyll and Hyde, and Solomon Kane. Marvel will not do The Shadow.

Steve Englehart will be writing The Hulk and Hero For Hire, and everything else.

STERANKO'S HISTORY OF COMICS VOL. II

This oversized package is going to absorb any criticism leveled at it, and my discussion of its flaws is just so much piss in the wind. With this in mind, let's proceed to examine a few of the problems that Steranko's mammoth undertaking presents.

As advertised in the Marvel comics of 1968, the book was initially designed to be a one-shot capsule history with the Stan Lee imprimatur plastered on it. The project, along with Steranko's enthusiasim, eventually snowballed into what was going to be the definitive history of comics up to and including the present. At this moment in time, Steranko is planning another four volumes, with an eventual revision of all six volumes to be published collectively in one gigantic hardcover! At the present rate of release we are all going to be very old people by the time Steranko has achieved his objective. Nevertheless, most diehard comic freaks will tell you--and Steranko will tell you too!--that it's well worth the wait. Is it?

Steranko, along with Neal Adams, was the greatest strip artist of the sixties, and if he put his mind to it could become, if not the greatest strip artist of all time, at least the greatest strip artist of our lifetime. But with this history of comics involving so much time and energy, his graphic story abilities are no longer being developed, and the buying public is being denied his unique talent. As good as Steranko's history may be, I'd still rather be reading Steranko's strips, and I suspect that fandom feels pretty much the same. What would you rather be reading...Talon (Steranko's Conanesque creation) or some more history?

I would like to see Steranko turn the rest of the work on the forthcoming volumes over to some close friends or associates and assume the role of it's editor. This would, hopefully, furnish him with the time to finish some of his graphic story projects and get his multitude of other ideas rolling, in particular his Comixscene magazine.

CONT. ON PAGE 29

ROY'S ROSTRUM

by ROY THOMAS

CONAN

Last month, we discussed how it came to pass that Marvel decided to produce a comic of Conan the Barbarian and by the time you read the first issue and see how the comic finally materialized on the stands.

Not quite the way I'd like it, though--There are always things which don't work out the way I want. Due to budgetary limitations, my original choice for penciller--John Buscema, who loves to do sword-and-sorcery art even though he does not read the stories--was out of the question. Jim Steranko was dormant and mumbling about his own Talon character, who will doubtlessly be appearing someday somehow somewhere; Jack Kirby, best super-hero artist of all time, wasn't available.

And then there was Barry Smith, my personal second choice. A talented young Britisher, recently returned to the Isles, and all of twenty summers old. Always on the verge of proving he was the truly good comic book artist that we all felt he would one day be. Willing to read and work over the material, and eager to try his all at a strip which hadn't already been established by someone else. Barry Smith it was...and I am glad!

Now I set about in earnest to read all Conan material. And I found this time a distinct pleasure in some of the better stories (mostly the ones by Robert E. Howard himself; L. Sprague de Camp was a smoother writer, but his stories just didn't seem like Conan to me. Lin Carter seemed much like de Camp, though less sure-handed as a writer. And Nyborg's Return of Conan read too much like a bad Burroughs pastiche--the one real loser in the ten published volumes, for my money!) Barry read several of the books, too---and then, working from my rather sketchy synopsis he began to draw.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: When Howard, the creator of CONAN died at age thirty, several Conan stories had been printed in the Weird Tales pulp. More recently, the demand for Conan adventures in the paperback books caused several writers, Carter, de Camp, and Nyborg, to be engaged to complete a number of unfinished Howard stories, adapt other Howard tales into Conan tales, or to completely originate new Conan stories to fill the demand.]

The first result was not, frankly, a happy one as far as either Stan or Barry or I was concerned. From the very splash page, things failed to go quite as we'd wanted them to. Barry had as we expected, plunged right into the story for a scene of Conan whirling about [Reprinted here last issue], albeit in rather restrained fashion on the first page. Barry promptly had him leap off a cliff into a pile of Vanir. Now, I'm just as big on in medias res as the next writer---but I felt that this would make it difficult to acclimate the reader to the fact that he was in a world of 12,000 years ago which was physically & mystically different from today's, or even yesterday's, world; besides, there just wasn't that good action we needed in the first few pages of the book. After that it began to pick up and by the second half of the book, Barry was "feeling" Conan and drawing Conan.

So--I sliced a brief skirmish out of those last few pages where it actually retarded climax building, and asked Barry to redraw the splash--and insert a new second page, showing the Vanir and Aesir battling it out and establishing Conan before he leaped off that cliff shouting a famous "By Crom!" The end result was a much happier book, although still one with which we were not totally satisfied. Dan Adkins, long one of my favorite inkers, did a creditable job on the issue--but somehow he didn't seem precisely the inker for Conan, on second glance. (There were other considerations for taking Dan off Conan as well, none of them a discredit to Dan's considerable talent, but they are extranneous here and I won't go into them.)

Thus, it was with some trepidation that I roughly plotted the second issue. The end product, this time, however--though quite different from what I had envisioned when I wrote the synopsis--was one of the best art jobs Barry turned in to date, with some crystal-clear story telling, improved art and layouts, and a firm grasp on just what the material was all about. (This is all the more odd because this second issue is as much Burroughs-oriented as Howardesque, even though Barry professes never to have read any of Edgar Rice Burroughs' work--and I've read precious little of him since I was 14 or so.) At any rate, it was with the second issue, particularly that I became truly proud to be associated with the comic--and I think Barry feels the same way, too.

We immediately began work on future issues, all to be published chronologically and in agreement with the informal history of Conan's career as mapped out years ago by fans. Thus this

ILLUSTRATIONS ON THIS AND THE FOLLOWING PAGE ARE UNUSED PAGES FROM CONAN #1, PENCILLED BY BARRY SMITH.

first issue illustrates the "Fruitless raiding against the Vanir" mentioned in the Lancer volume Conan, while the second issue takes place as not too far afterward; the beast-men of #2 take their existence from passages in Howard's "Hyborian Age" essay (pp. 25 and 27 of Conan, if you want to look it up). Number three carries Conan to the border between Hyperborea and Brythunia--in order to establish the long-standing hatreds, Conan feels for the Hyperboreans--mentioned in a number of volumes. And with #4, we have--"Tower of the Elephant," an adaptation of the earliest, (chronological) Conan tale written by Howard.

A word about the series. We'll be adapting many of the actual Robert E. Howard Conan stories--though not those written by de Camp, Carter and Nyborg. Legal reasons, you understand. Here and there, where de Camp edited Howard, we'll be working from the original Howard manuscripts (or Xerox copies thereof) so that a few facts and a few names will be different. Confusing, though, only to the expert--and the purist--whose weight in the balance in next to nil, anyway.

And, as much as de Camp did with certain of the stories, we'll be adapting various non-Conan tales into Conan stories, something often rather easy to do. Issue #3, for instance, is an adaptation of the posthumously-published Howard tale "The Grey God Passes" which has a slave-hero by the name of Conn (close, no?) and which contains several elements of considerable literary merit. Good comic book material, too!

--And if you don't like the series by when you get to #4, "The Tower of the Elephant," I'd suggest you swear off it forever because it will never take. In it, I believe that Barry and I acheived the balance between literary and artistic and commercial considerations which we have been striving long months to achieve. Whether I shall find that anyone likes that issue or not--I shall doubtless consider it one of the best of the Marvel or non-Marvel comics of 1971.....with scarcely a blush crossing my dimpled cheeks. I think I know good comic books--And this is a real good one.

[Sal Buscema, by the way, takes over on the inking with issue #2, and while he's not necessarily a better inker than Adkins, per se--That's not important anyway...he lends to Barry Smith's pencils an illustrative approach which is almost perfect. Only a fan who has a shrine to Frazetta resting in his alcove could fail to find some merit in the Smith/S. Buscema collaboration.]

But, enough bugle-blowing. After all, as I write these lines, I know than the fans will be with their own opinions, and that it is theirs--not mine--that will eventually make or break the book. Some of those opinions, in fact, began to arrive at our offices even before the book came out.

This hardly surprised me. Long before the news of the coming of Conan to Marvel comics had broken in fanzines, I predicted precisely tones and types of mail we would receive in advance of the book's publication--which will probably be a great deal like the mail that will arrive in July and August when the magazine is on the newsstands.

Many notes, of course, were pure congratulatory epistles--amazed but glad that Marvel was responding to fan pressure (and it is, to a certain extent, no doubt about it). Many expressed the viewpoint that only Frank Frazetta (or possibly one of his disciples such as youngblooded-

Berni Wrightson, who is now doing a King Kull adaptation for us) could possibly illustrate it. I won't dignify that viewpoint with much reply, even though I admire Frazetta's artwork, because Conan got along just fine for some years before Frazetta came on the scene--and these over-eager souls forget that, at least before this comic-book, sword-and-sorcery has been primarily a medium for writers, not artists.

Other notes, of course, castigated us even for trying to do a Conan comic under the Comics Code. The limitations on blood and sex in Code-approved comics, they felt, would stop us from a decent interpretation. I don't agree, obviously but this point is, at least, a defensible one.

A few readers, not fans of Barry's work in the past, learned that Smith was to do the drawing and denounced it, sight unseen. I expected, that I would be denounced for daring to tread in the footsteps of Howard and de Camp, as well,but that's one prediction that hasn't materialized--yet.

One particularly distasteful individual upon hearing but the vaguest rumor of Marvel publishing Conan as a comic book--wrote me a personal diatribe which vilified the whole idea. He saw himself as a self-appointed committee-of-one to protect the valiant Cimmerian from the ravage by Marvel, DC, or any other card-carrying Comics Code member. He was, he intimated, in possession of L. Sprague de Camp's actual home address, and he was going to write him a personal letter, urging him to take action against us. (In point of fact, de Camp seems not to have felt strongly one way or the other about the proposed comic as it concerned neither his written material nor a paperback he had done.)

There is little one can do with fanatics... outside of shooting them or ignoring them. I was something closer to the second extreme, though I couldn't resist pointing out to the skeptic that even the critics in the New York Times wait until after they've seen a play to review it. I'd suggested then that he give us one issue, preferably a few, since a comic book is a growing--a progressing organism...And then write a more coherent criticism which would be given such consideration as it deserves. He hasn't troubled a certain Associate Editor at Marvel since.

Luckily, those persons who have viewed one or more Conan tales in advance of publication---they have, despite reservations, been much more enthusiastic. Writer Ted White, never a strong Barry Smith fan, felt our British bombshell had finally come of age by the second issue. Glenn Lord, executor of the Robert E. Howard estate, commented that he preferred Smith's rendition to the more "brutish" Frazetta version. (as do I.)

One thing, though, seems for certain. For as long as Conan the Barbarian is published, in comic book form by Marvel, there are certain to be admirers and detractors--writing page after page of learned and passionate discourse on each issue.

I hope they go on writing for a long...long time.

ALEX TOTH SPEAKS

The following is the keynote address to the 1972 Comic Art Convention, which was held on July 4th Weekend at the Statler Hilton in New York City. Alex Toth is an opinionated, outspoken comic book artists whose credits include 77 Sunset Strip, Eclipso, Johnny Thunder, The Black Canary, and Hot Wheels.

There are as many reasons as points on the compass from which we've travelled for being here today, and as many ways of expressing them.

Whether fan, collector, dealer, amatuer, or veteran contributor to fanzines, underground, or establishment, we've gathered here as equals on common ground to express our mutual interest in and appreciation for the comic strip, which has given us hours of delight in the world contained in these little frames. And despite our misgivings about the present state of the art, we have faith in the survival of the form as a potent story-telling medium. But it is only as good as you the fans and readers insist on it being, or as we who are involved in the production choose to make it.

I, for one, am disappointed and am opposed to the lack of challenge to writers and artists working in the field today, and the low level of performance that policies of pressure and time have brought about. We can, and damn well ought to do better, and you out there can help, if you point out that you are unhappy with the overall quality of today's productions. We must raise the overall level of concept, and it starts up there: concept. It starts up there, format, design, writing and art. We think you deserve better, and we, the delineators, do too.

Proliferating ever more mediocrity in the market place is touted to be sound fiscal policy. If company A puts out sixty titles, company B should put out eighty. Squeeze them off, drown them out. In order to do that, pressure increases, quality drops, and wemake a hell of a lot of compromise to get that stuff out every month. And more bad is not good, because eventually YOU are going to get turned off. A lot of us have gotten turned off. And you can't buy the feeling that a writer has to give, or an artist has to give. You can't buy it, you can give him a grand a page, and it wouldn't make a damn bit of difference, because it's something he's got to give. He's got to give it because he wants to give it, and he can be turned on by a good script and draw a beautiful job, and the writer who backs him up will sense that and work harder on his end. On the other hand, mediocrity turns everyone off, and that goes down the line too.

The silent rebuttal to the policies that are being exercised today are the declining sales charts. And they are being either misinterpreted or unheeded. Despite poor editorial judgement at the highest level, and blunders, no one dares admit their complicity in creating another disaster. The products and their initiators are always blameless. Blame T.V, blame distribution or whatever, but never the product. That is a no-no.

A little honesty would help. It would help clear the air, and improve that product if we admit our errors, for once done we can learn from them, and start anew. Deny those errors, and the decision maker's blind spot grows bigger and bigger while the

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

THE NEXT MINUTE, I HAD A SHOCK THAT ALMOST STOPPED ME, TOO!...
CAPTAIN DEXTER, IT'S TIME YOUR STRANGE ACTIONS WERE EXPLAINED! RETURN TO THE BASE IMMEDIATELY!

market shrinks, cancelling out any progress that has been made at the top, in the middle, or at the bottom.

Voicing criticism of the system, and its practitioners is an exercise in futility. Criticize from the outside, and you're dismissed as uninitiated and unknowledgable of the problems that exist within the field. Criticize from within, and you have committed treason, by having violated the code of silence.

But say it we must. We can't afford sacred cows, and they're just so much beef on the hoof to me. We must own up to the failures that we've committed, turn around and build successes upon them if the business and the form itself is to survive. Ajob well

done sells itself and creates its own market, striking new ground. We need to reinstill enthusiasm in our work, and thus in the readers who buy our work. We need excellence.

To this end, I would like to quote from Bob Towser's book, Up The Organization, which says, " If you don't do it excellently, don't do it at all. Because if it's not excellent, it won't be profitable, and it won't be fun. And if you're not in business for fun and profit, what the hell are you doing there?"

Thank you very much.

STERANKO CONT.

Anyway, getting back to the "History" itself...I personally enjoyed it immensely and have only one very major gripe with the book--Steranko's proclivity towards exposition of strip characters through all too dreary plot recapitulations. The excising of these plot synopsis' would have improved the reading pace immeasurably. Yet how does one retain the flavor of a strip or character without synopsis? Why, with a strip reprint, obviously, and the Spirit section of the book is the most succesful due in large part to the reprint presented there (the only one in the book!).

The idea of plot summaries in a history of comics is ludicrous. The heartbeat of a strip is it's visualization! Irregardless of how charming or exciting a plot line may be, it is the artist who turns it into something unique...something "comic" This absence of strip examples is a serious blunder on the part of any comics historian, and an even more appalling oversight coming from a

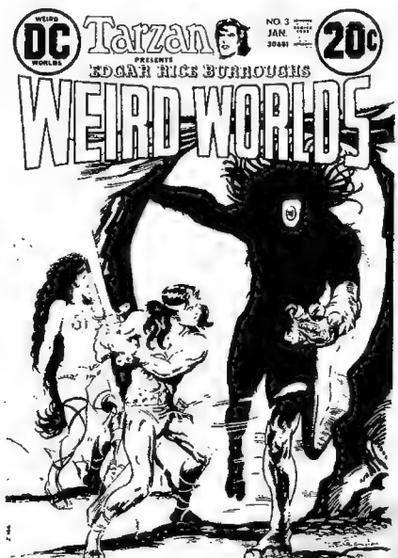
CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

Demon 3 (c) 1972 NPP, Inc.

NEW

SUPERGIRL (C) 1972 NPP

FROM DC



Weird Worlds No. 3 (c) 1972 ERB, Inc.

Mind As Beholds The Eye : Mobius Tripp

Every so often, someone will ask me, "Why do you read that crap?"

Something Raymond Chandler said about detective stories also applies to comic books. I quote: "Nor is it any part of my thesis to maintain that it is a vital and significant form of art. There are no vital and significant forms of art. There is only art, and precious little of that. The growth of populations has in no way increased the amount; it has merely increased the adeptness with substitutes can be produced and packaged." So especially is it with comic books.

Comic books are trash. I do not doubt that comics are an artform, 5 million fans can't be wrong. Comic books are an artform, granted, but they remain trash, nonetheless.

As an artform, comics are most frequently compared to the movies, and the comparison remains valid. Comic books are movies in print, as Will Eisner likes to call them. But as art, comics are popular art, junk art. They are mass produced and mass read, and, in order to continue, comic books are forced to aim for the lowest common denomenator among readers; they must please the masses.

We, who have worked on this magazine, and you who are reading it, have one thing in common. We are comic book junkies. We love the comics, and we love what they mean to us. Comics represent a modern mythology, as Jack Kirby would say. Playing our hopes, fears, doubts, and joys on a grand scale, they are more relevant to our lives than the morning newspaper. The comics appeal to our idealism, our romanticism, and while we are reading the magazine, we are the hero.

But comic books, however, enjoyable, appeal to our innocence, our naivety, especially the superhero, whose cosmically innocent sense of good and evil is the most attractive thing about him. While we normally wallow in a world that we can't fight, when we become the hero, we CAN battle evil directly, we CAN come to grips with our oppressors.

Small wonder then, that the superhero runs in cycles of popularity, as generations of idealistic youngsters populate their daydreams with Green Lanterns and Solomon Grundys, and then elevate out of their innocence and idealism as they grow older, and a hungry world threatens to engulf them. Small wonder then, that horror and crime comics should follow and infiltrate the cycle as we begin to grow fearful of our darker selves. The mythological sense of comics continues, moving into darker realms of myth.

In the forties, when the 1st superhero cycle began, we, as a country, having just come out of depression, were idealistic, and we had in Nazi Germany an evil we could touch and fight. To combat Nazis and fifth columnists, we created Captain Americas, Blackhawks, Spy Smashers, and Boy Commandos.

Immediately afterward, when new world had been won, we were confronted with the Red Scare and the MCCarthy era, and terror and paranoia swept the country. It was natural that our popular culture reflectthe changes, and so we caught our fears in the guise of horror, and we thought that by teaching ourselves to laugh at our fears we could teach ourselves to laugh.

In the aftermath of the McCarthy era, and in the early 60s, a new generation of idealists grew up, and the comics rose to grasp it with new Hawkmen and Green Lanterns. The fifties had taken their toll on us though, and we found ourselves unsure of right or wrong. Thus we slipped Hulks and Spider-Men in with our Batman and Flashes, and looked upon ourselves as these.

Now, it seems, idealism and the superhero must wait for the next generation. The seventies are looking as bad as the fifties.

Comic books are a reflection of our lives. They are an Alice's mirror to our hidden selves.

Every so often, someone will ask me, "Why do you read that crap?" And I think for a moment and say, "Because they're fun."

What else is there?

Buffalo Chips

As all of you who are reading this are no doubt aware, the comic art form is experiencing a resurgence of interest throughout this country. If you are not a collector/connoisseur yourself, you are at least aware of it through the recent aboveground coverage in Time, News-

CONT. ON NEXT PAGE 29

week, N.Y. Times and our very own Daily Cardinal which runs an infrequent comix column by Doug Johnson. Milwaukee's Bugle American is also given to occasional comics coverage (primarily underground).

Virtually every major American city has at least one store involved in the buying and selling of back issues and current items, either exclusively, or adjunct to other interests such as used books, science fiction, or general nostalgia items (i.e. Milwaukee's "Good Old Days"). Madison doesn't...and we hope to remedy this situation somewhat.

In the interests of local fandom and in lieu of a comic shop with which to provide for us a place to talk, buy, sell and trade, we have undertaken this effort that you now hold in your hands...a paltry effort, perhaps, but a first step at least. With your support, we hope it gets better.

One of our primary goals with this magazine is to ascertain what kind of fandom exists in the Madison area and to what extent this fandom is willing to organize around its common interests. So if you give a damn at all, let us know what you're thinking...either write or give us a call!

The benefits derived from fan contact are many. Discussing the metaphysics of the Marvel universe, Carl Barks and Jack Kirby or the emergence of the undergrounds and what they may portune for the future of the overgrounds, the viability/necessity of the comics code or the mutual appreciation of a strip or artist is something that we all enjoy.

It also provides for the opportunity to obtain back issues through organized trips to the various comic book conventions held throughout the country.

Comic conventions have been in existence since 1964 and although the major conventions are usually held on the east and west coasts, there have been within the last few years excellent conventions held in Chicago, Minneapolis, Detroit, Kansas City and St. Louis. All of these conventions are within relatively decent driving time or fairly economical flying time. And if you dig comics and you've never been to a convention, then right now is the time to start!

The Old Time Comic Book Club of Illinois is holding mini-cons every third Sunday of every month beginning August 20, 1972. Their recent Nostalgia con featured Russ Heath as guest artist and there were a tremendous amount of old comics and comic related items on hand for perusual and purchase.

We also feel that an organized group of fans could put some pressure on the miserable distribution (or nondistribution) of comics by Badger/Madison news agencies. These archaic companies still refuse to carry any of the magazine sized black and white comics such as Creepy, Vampirella, Nightmare Psycho, and of course they never did carry (and along with other pea-brained distributors around the country were responsible for the demise of) such excellent comic magazines as Savage Tales, Web of Horror and His Name Is Savage. They still refuse to distribute Charlton comics and never did distribute Tower or Skywald...the latter two companies now defunct due in large measure, once again, to the close-minded policies of Badger/Madison and their counterparts across the nation. Perhaps some kind of organized and consistent pressure would result in improved distribution for the Madison area. It's worth a damn good try anyway!

So if you like our ideas, if you think our ideas are rotten, if you have anything to contribute, if "you got E.C.'s", if you like Alex Toth, if you know anything at all about page layout...let us know! This is gonna be Madison fandom's focal point, and that means you!

STERANKO CONT.

professional comics artist! Hopefully this mistake will be rectified in future volumes.

However, the history does stand as an indispensable chronicle of those "golden" days, and most of the misgivings I have concerning this book could only be alleviated by Steranko's relinquishment of this project to others and his return once again to his unexcelled preeminence as graphic story teller. The shoe of the graphic story chronicler ill befits a man with such creative talent in his soul.

----Ayres

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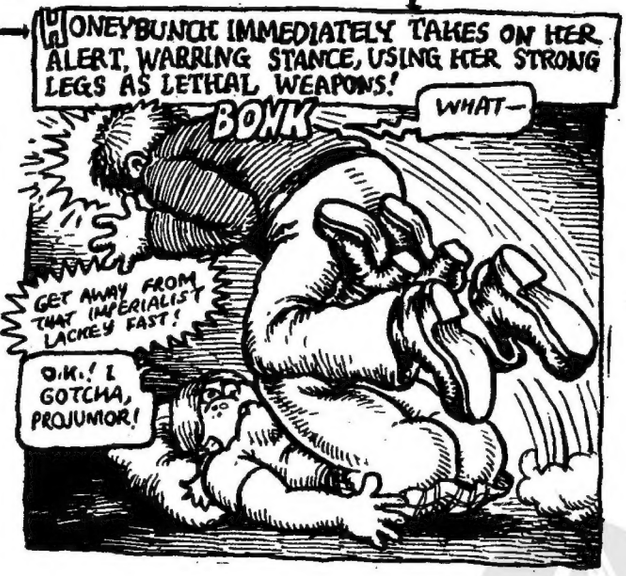

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